

Cultural entrepreneurship and literary festivals - their relation to local and sustainable development

Fotini Maniou * and Roido Mitoula

Department of Economy and Sustainable Development, Harokopion University of Athens, Greece.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2025, 14(02), 1407-1415

Publication history: Received on 15 January 2025; revised on 22 February 2025; accepted on 25 February 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2025.14.2.0559>

Abstract

This study deals with literary festivals as important actors of cultural entrepreneurship and their role in strengthening the local economy, as they often motivate visitors to specific cities or regions through the organization of literary tours, creative writing workshops and open events for the public, they contribute to the promotion of cultural heritage and the creation of experiences that link literature and tourism and enhance cultural entrepreneurship. The connection with local culture is seen as the core of the festival's identity. Events that present literary works with direct reference to local history or incorporate traditional arts, music and customs into their programme, showcase the identity of the place in an authentic way

Keywords: Cultural Entrepreneurship; Literary Festivals; Local Economy; Sustainability

1. Introduction

Literary festivals can be defined as organised events, often annual, that focus on literature and the people who produce and consume it: writers, readers, publishers and cultural institutions. They combine book launches, public readings, creative writing workshops, roundtable discussions and a variety of interactive activities, with the aim of fostering literacy and a love of writing (Sapiro, 2022).

The organization and development of literary festivals have become a multifaceted cultural event with significant effects on contemporary society. Literary festivals are not only limited to the promotion of reading and literary expression, but are closely linked to cultural entrepreneurship, tourism development, economy and cultural diplomacy. The participation of different artistic forms, the presence of internationally renowned writers are now integral elements of their identity, making them cultural "businesses" with a wide range of activity (Driscoll, 2015).

2. Objectives and characteristics of literary festivals

The promotion of literature and reading is one of the main objectives of literary festivals, as connecting writers and readers promotes a deeper understanding of literary works and encourages reading. At the same time, festivals act as platforms for intercultural communication and cultural exchange, bringing together writers from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, thus enhancing the intercultural dimension (Sapiro, 2022).

In addition, literary festivals contribute to the development of the local economy and tourism. In addition to their cultural value, they improve the tourist image of a region and enhance the local market (Dychkovskyy & Ivanov, 2020). At the same time, they promote education and creativity, with workshops and events offering opportunities for people of different ages to enhance their writing skills (Rossetti & Quinn, 2019). The participation of international writers gives

* Corresponding author: Fotini Maniou

festivals a global dimension, attracting public interest. In many cases, literary festivals are integrated into cultural tourism strategies, creating partnerships with local stakeholders and promoting tourism development (Georgoula & Terkenli, 2017).

The promotion of local culture through festivals also plays an important role, as they showcase the tradition and cultural identity of the region. Events are not limited to book presentations, but also include a diversity of activities, such as workshops, concerts, theatre readings and even literature-inspired activities (Hoppen et al., 2014). Festivals also combine the experience economy with innovation, offering memorable experiences through cultural activities and using digital media for this. This combination of experience and innovation contributes to the sustainable economic development of festivals (Ferenc, 2016).

3. Historical background/ their cultural and social importance

The evolution of literary festivals in Europe can be traced back to early forms of public readings and artistic events, which appeared as early as the Middle Ages. During the Enlightenment, literature took on a central role in public discourse, as events were organised in salons and academies where intellectuals discussed literary ideas and works (Sapiro, 2022).

In the 19th century, the spread of printing and publishing contributed to mass access to literary works. In the early 20th century, the first contemporary events that could be called 'literary festivals' took shape, exemplified by the Cheltenham Literature Festival, which began in 1949. Subsequently, several literary festivals emerged, such as the Hay Festival (1988) and the Edinburgh International Book Festival (1983), which emerged as professional events, hosting leading writers from around the world and promoting literature as an integral part of the world's cultural heritage (Georgoula & Terkenli, 2017).

Today, literary festivals have evolved into multi-dimensional events, utilising technologies such as livestreaming, offering digital tickets and combining literature with other art forms such as music, theatre and dance. At the same time, they act as platforms for political and social dialogue, giving a platform to writers who comment on and analyse contemporary challenges. The international participation of writers and audiences from all over the world enhances intercultural exchange and highlights the global role of literature. (Driscoll, 2015).

4. Literary festivals as cultural enterprises

The contemporary view of literary festivals does not view them as simply cultural events, but as "cultural enterprises". This approach encompasses all the economic and managerial dimensions that determine their success and sustainability (Roach, 2024). It considers not only the artistic and cultural value of festivals, but also their contribution to the local and global economy, as well as the management strategies that ensure their long-term sustainability.

One of the main aspects that ensures the sustainability of literary festivals is their funding, which is based on a variety of income sources. One of the most direct and important ways of funding is the income from ticket sales. In many festivals, ticket income is the main source of funding for the events. A prime example is the Hay Festival in Wales, which has established itself as one of the world's most successful events, attracting thousands of visitors each year. Visitors pay to attend talks, readings, debates and workshops, and the high attendance ensures a steady income for the event (Roach, 2024). (Maniou, 2023) (Maniou & Mitoula, 2024)

At the same time, literary festivals rely on sponsorships from private companies and international organizations. Due to their reputation as spaces for cultural innovation and creativity, many festivals attract major sponsors such as publishing houses, technology companies and international cultural organizations. These sponsors provide significant financial support to the events, enhancing the sustainability and international recognition of the festivals. For example, the Jaipur Literature Festival in India relies heavily on sponsorships that cover a large part of its operating costs. These sponsorships, in addition to funding, also help to attract authors and sponsors of international interest, enhancing the festival's global reputation (Maniou et al., 2024).

Another key factor in the funding and success of literary festivals is partnerships with publishing houses. Publishers take advantage of the publicity and lively interaction that festivals offer to promote new books and authors. The literary presentations and discussions organised in these contexts act as a powerful marketing tool to promote books and build relationships with readers. In return, publishing houses provide financial and organisational support to the festivals, helping to cover costs while providing publicity and prestige to the events (Weber, 2018).

Overall, literary festivals have developed a multifaceted funding model based on tickets, sponsorships and partnerships with publishers. This strategic approach not only makes them financially viable, but also enhances their position as important cultural institutions with wider social and cultural influence (Manola & Gioka, 2021), (Manola et al., 2022a)

5. Festival and local economy

Literary festivals are important drivers for the economic development of the local communities in which they are organised, providing multiple opportunities for economic stimulation and cultural regeneration.

Literature festivals have the potential to significantly increase tourism in their host regions. Attracting visitors from different places, both within and outside the country, creates an increased demand for services such as accommodation, catering and entertainment. For example, large-scale festivals such as the Jaipur Literature Festival in India and the Edinburgh International Book Festival in Scotland manage to attract thousands of visitors from all over the world, thus significantly boosting local tourism. These visitors not only attend the events, but usually stay in the area for several days, exploring other tourism activities, which adds even more revenue to the local economy (Ferreira & Villares, 2022).

Moreover, literature festivals directly boost local businesses, regardless of their size. Small bookstores, food outlets, local shops and tourist agencies benefit from the increased traffic generated by festivals. Visitors not only buy books or other festival-related products, but also consume at local businesses, contributing to the development of the local market. This relationship is strengthened by the business partnerships that often result as local businesses find opportunities to showcase themselves through the events (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002).

The contribution of literary festivals to the local economy extends to the creation of both temporary and permanent jobs. Organising a festival requires the employment of many people, whether it is the technical staff involved in stage production and events, or organisers, volunteers and service providers such as equipment suppliers and performers. Many of these positions are temporary, lasting only for the duration of the festival, while others, especially those related to long-term organisation and management, can be more permanent. These festivals also provide professional development opportunities for young people wishing to enter the cultural sector, offering experience and networking in the cultural events sector (Manola et al., 2022b)

Overall, literary festivals are not only artistic and cultural events, but are important economic development factors that help create jobs, boost tourism and support local entrepreneurship.

6. Sustainability of literary festivals

Cooperation with local institutions and cultural organisations is a key element for the success and sustainability of literary festivals. Universities, libraries and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) contribute substantially by taking on roles such as curating the programme, hosting authors and providing suitable venues for events (Søndergaard, 2021). Management strategies also play a key role in the sustainability of festivals. The implementation of innovative activities, such as literary walks, open workshops and the integration of digital media, offers opportunities for interaction and broadens the reach of the festival to a wider audience (Roach, 2024).

Sustainability and care for the environment are key priorities in contemporary cultural management, with literary festivals playing an essential role in this effort (Zahopoulou, 2021). Whether international festivals or smaller local events, implementing sustainable practices helps to develop a healthy model that ensures longevity and community acceptance.

Adopting environmentally friendly practices at literary festivals focuses on recycling, waste reduction and sustainable use of resources. These initiatives are gaining momentum due to the global ecological crisis and increasing public demand for "green" events. Many festivals are implementing recycling programmes using waste separation bins and encouraging visitors to actively participate in waste management. In addition, using reusable materials, reducing single-use plastic and providing digital programmes are practices that enhance the sustainable direction of festivals (Anagnostou, 2018). Promoting the use of public transport or bicycles to transport visitors also reduces the carbon footprint of events. The combination of all these actions forms a pattern of behaviour that positively influences participants and promotes the organisers' sensitivity towards the environment.

The use of local resources is equally important for the sustainability of literary festivals, as it strengthens the local economy and preserves the cultural identity of the region (Zahopoulou, 2021). The promotion of local products, such

as traditional food, wines, crafts and souvenirs, adds authenticity to the events, making them unique. At the same time, it supports the economic activity of local businesses and creates a positive growth cycle. Cultural itineraries that focus on literary heritage or local attractions enable visitors to combine literature with exploration of the region (Ferreira & Villares, 2022). These activities enrich the visitor's experience, increase the length of stay and enhance the tourist image of the region, while benefiting the local community economically. (Manola & Teliopoulou, 2021) (Manola & Angelopoulos, 2020). (Manola, & Koltsikoglou, 2020)

Concluding this section we stress the significance of all digital technologies in the field of culture and education. These technologies are highly effective and productive and facilitate and improve both education and cultural festivals and awareness, procedures through mobile devices that bring educational and cultural activities everywhere [32-33], various ICTs applications that are the main supporters of education and cultural representations [34-42], and AI, STEM, and ROBOTICS [43-47] that raise educational and cultural festivals to new performance levels. In addition, the development and integration of ICTs with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence [48-54], accelerates and improves educational and cultural practices and results even more.

7. Research-methodology

The questionnaire combines closed-ended questions, which facilitate statistical analysis, and open-ended questions, which allow for the collection of qualitative data. Data collection was conducted at the Little Tree Books & Coffee book café, a venue strategically chosen due to the public's interest in literature. The survey sample consisted of 130 participants with varying levels of participation in cultural events. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the data, including the presentation of quantitative data and the processing of qualitative responses. In addition, the Two-Step Clustering method was applied to categorize the participants. The largest percentage was female 65%, in terms of age 80% were in the age group 50 to 70 the educational level was majority high school and university graduates and their income was majority 70% 15-20,000 per year.

7.1 Question 1. Graph 1. How often do you attend a literary festival?

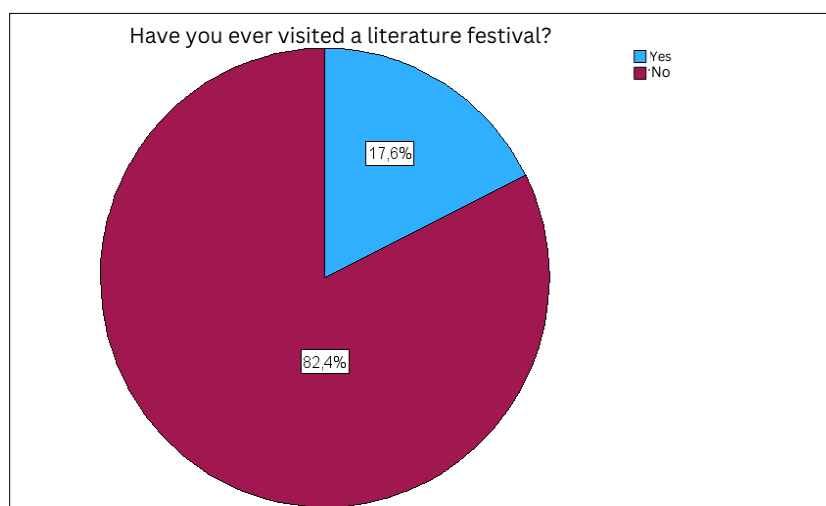


Figure 1 How often do you attend a literary festival?

7.2 Question 2. Graph 2. Do you think that literary festivals help to spread literature?

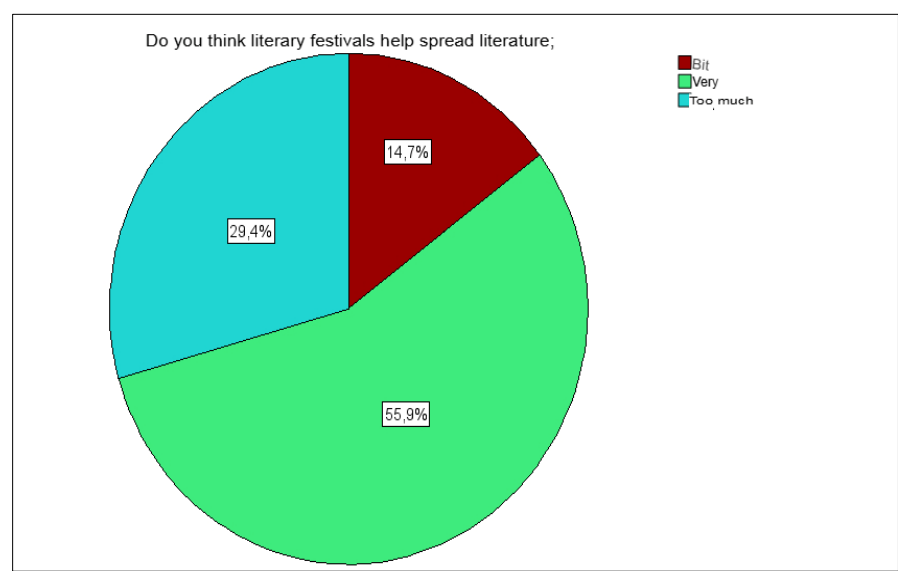


Figure 2 Do you think that literary festivals help to spread literature?

7.3 Question 3. Graph 3. What motivates you most to attend a literary festival?

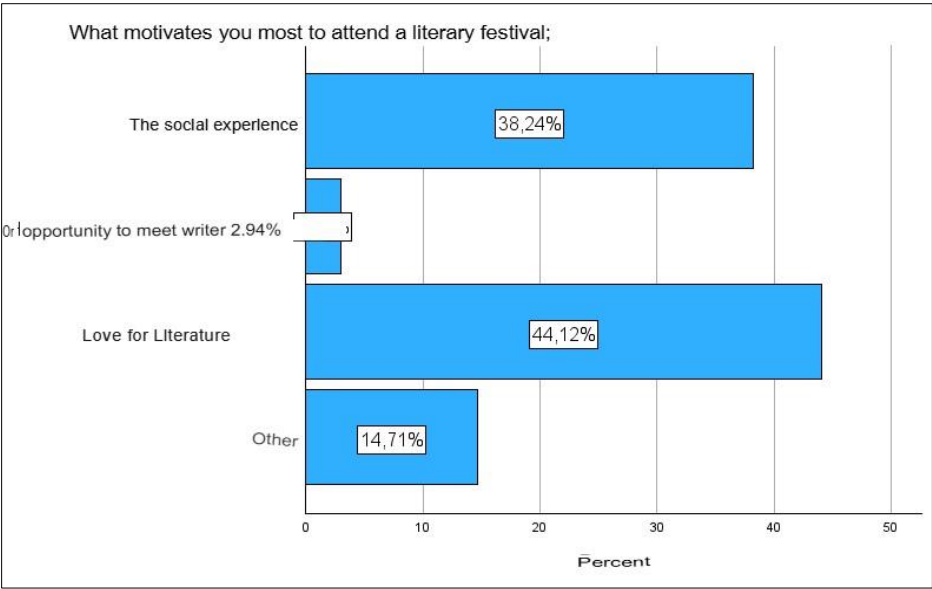


Figure 3 What motivates you most to attend a literary festival?

7.4 Question 4. Graph 4 what do you think are the economic benefits of festivals to the local community?

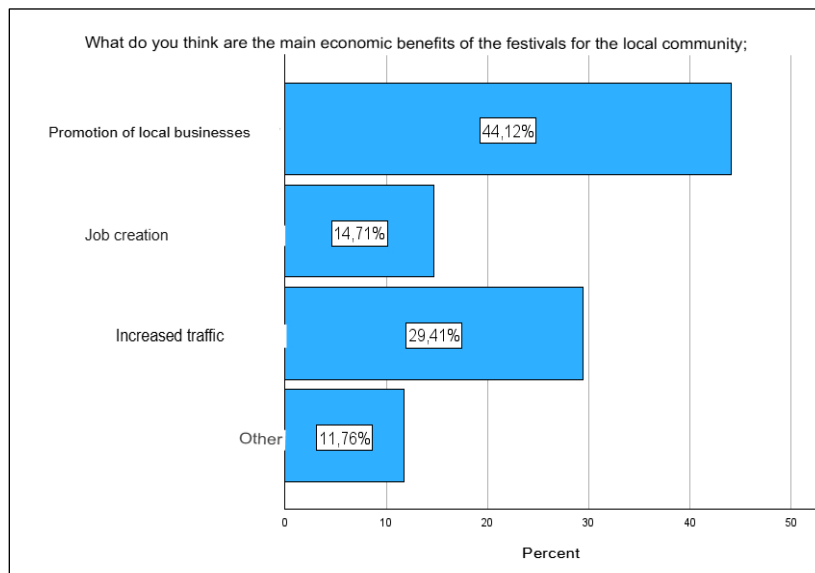


Figure 4 What do you think are the economic benefits of festivals to the local community?

7.5 Question 5. Graph 5 How important do you consider environmental sustainability in organizing festivals?

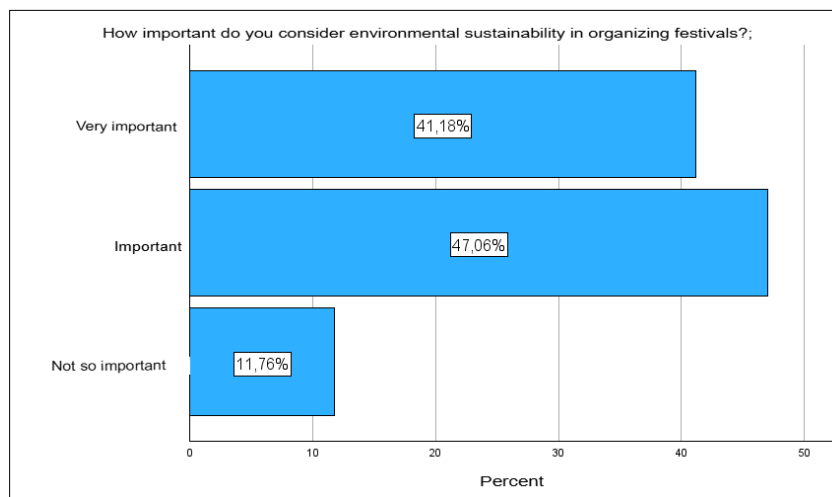


Figure 5 How important do you consider environmental sustainability in organizing festivals?

8. Conclusion

Maintaining authenticity in literary festivals is not only about the content of the events, but also about how they are integrated into the local culture. True connection to the cultural context of the region requires collaboration with local institutions, writers, artists and cultural organisations. In this way, the festival is not seen as an 'imported' event, but as an organic part of the local host community. The connection with local culture should be genuine and meaningful, incorporating traditional arts, music and customs into the programme of events. Activities such as literary walks bring visitors into direct contact with local literature and cultural landmarks of the region, offering a comprehensive cultural experience. In this way, the festival highlights the unique identity of the place and strengthens its connection with the local community.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The Authors would like to thank the SPECIALIZATION IN ICTs AND SPECIAL EDUCATION: PSYCHOPEDAGOGY OF INCLUSION Postgraduate studies Team, for their support.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Driscoll, M. (2015) *The Impact of Literary Festivals on the Cultural and Economic Landscape*. Routledge.
- [2] Ferreira, A. R. and Villares, L. (2022) 'The Role of Literary Festivals in Promoting Local Tourism and Economy', *Tourism Economics*, 28(2), pp. 249-267.
- [3] Georgoula, E. and Terkenli, T. S. (2017) 'Literary Festivals and Cultural Tourism: A Case Study from Greece', *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 15(3), pp. 213-230.
- [4] Hoppen, N., Thomas, L. and Fawcett, A. (2014) *The Cultural Economy of Literary Festivals*. Springer.
- [5] Roach, R. (2024) *Cultural Festivals as Business Enterprises: A Model for Sustainable Growth*. Cultural Enterprise Press.
- [6] Rossetti, M. and Quinn, L. (2019) *Literary Festivals and Their Educational Impact*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [7] Sapiro, G. (2022) *The Globalization of Literary Festivals: A Sociocultural Perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- [8] Weber, P. (2014) 'Literary Festivals and Cultural Entrepreneurship: New Trends and Impacts', *Journal of Cultural Entrepreneurship*, 6(1), pp. 45-62.
- [9] Weber, P. (2018) *Literary Festivals and the Arts of Cultural Diplomacy*. Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Ψαρού, Ν. (2016) 'Το Φεστιβάλ Τέχνης και Λογοτεχνίας Σύμης: Πολιτιστική Κληρονομιά και Τουρισμός', *Ελληνική Πολιτιστική Κληρονομιά*, 25(2), pp. 111-125.
- [11] Anagnostou, K. (2018) *The impact of cultural events on the image of a city*. University of Patras.
- [12] Zahopoulou, M. (2021) *Literary tourism as a phenomenon and its development prospects in Greece*. Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- [13] Dychkovskyy, S. and Ivanov, S. (2020) 'Festival tourism as part of international tourism and a factor in the development of cultural tourism', *Information and Media*, 89, pp. 73-82. <https://doi.org/10.15388/Im.2020.89.41>
- [14] Ferenc, J. (2016) *Breaking Boundaries: European Poetry Festivals and Their Audiences*. Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication.
- [15] Ferreira, A. and Villares, M. (2022) 'The impact of literary festivals on boosting tourist activity: The case of Escritaria', *CITUR*.
- [16] O'Sullivan, D. and Jackson, M. J. (2002) 'Festival tourism: A contributor to sustainable local economic development?', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 10(4), pp. 325-342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580208667171>
- [17] Rossetti, G. and Quinn, B. (2019) 'Learning at literary festivals', in Jenkins, C. and Lund, C. (eds.) *Literary Tourism: Theories, Practice and Case Studies*. CABI, pp. X-X.
- [18] Roach, R. (2024) 'Book festivals and the special economic zone of culture', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2024.2401520>
- [19] Sapiro, G. (2022) 'Literature festivals: A new authority in the transnational literary field', *Journal of World Literature*, 7(3), pp. 303-331. <https://doi.org/10.1163/24056480-00703002>

- [20] Søndergaard, C. S. (2021) 'From independent publishers to literary festivals: Exploring the challenges and changes in the publishing industry and the impact of cultural policy', *Leviathan: Interdisciplinary Journal in English*, 7.
- [21] Maniou, F. (2023) 'Cultural entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism in Mediterranean islands', *Journal of Tourism Research*, 30(B).
- [22] Maniou, F. & Mitoula, R. (2024) 'Cultural entrepreneurship and industrial buildings - Case study: olive oil mill-museum of Vrana in Gera Lesvos', 1st National Conference on "Urban Sustainability - Historic Cities", Ancient Olympia, 18-20 October, Harokopio University, Department of Economics and Sustainable Development-Syros Institute.
- [23] Maniou, F., Mitoula, R., & Kostakis, I. (2024) 'The possibilities for cultural entrepreneurship in Eleusis as the European capital of culture', *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 13(01), pp. 841-849. <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2024.13.1.1750>
- [24] Manola, M. & Teliopoulou, K. (2021) 'Cultural Routes of Apostle Paul in Greece', *Journal of Tourism Research*, 26.
- [25] Manola, M. & Angelopoulos, M. (2020) 'Cultural itinerary in Lemnos', *Sustainable Development, Culture, Traditions Journal*, 1.
- [26] Manola, M. & Koltsikoglou, G. (2020) 'Cultural-experimental wine routes in Italy-Tuscany', *Sustainable Development, Culture, Traditions Journal*, 1.
- [27] Manola, M. & Gioka, E. (2021) 'Literature tourism in Greece. Case study Spinaloga', *Sustainable Development, Culture, Traditions Journal*, 1.
- [28] Manola, M., Tsatalbassoglou, A. I., & Pappas, G. (2022) 'Sui passi di El Greco in Grecia', *ITI – Intercultural Translation Intersemiotic*, 11(1).
- [29] Manola, M. & Tsatalbassoglou, I., Kamaroudis, S. (2022) 'Cultural tourism - In the places of Sapphus', *Journal of Tourism Research*, 29(A). <https://jotr.eu/index.php/volume29/328-cultural-tourism-in-the-places-of-sapphus>
- [30] Manola, M., Maniou, F., Vouglanis, T., & Soldatou, A. (2023) 'Literary routes in the footsteps of Sherlock Holmes', *Sustainable Development, Culture, Traditions Journal*, 12(1), pp. 79-85.
- [31] Manola, M., Tsatalbassoglou, I., Koltsikoglou, G., & Maniou, F. (2023) 'Cultural trek in the Greek-speaking villages of Lower Italy', *Open Journal for Studies in Arts*, 6(2), pp. 41-56. <https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojsa.0602.02041m>
- [32] Stathopoulou A, Karabatzaki Z, Tsiros D, Katsantoni S, Drigas A, 2019 Mobile apps the educational solution for autistic students in secondary education , *Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (IJIM)* 13 (2), 89-101<https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v13i02.9896>
- [33] M Karyotaki, A Drigas, C Skianis 2022 The Role of Mobiles and Women in the Sustainable Local Economic Development. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies* 16 (22)
- [34] I Chaidi, C Papoutsis, A Drigas, C Skianis 2022 Women: E-Entrepreneurship and Emotional Intelligence Technium *Soc. Sci. J.* 30, 214
- [35] Karyotaki M, Bakola L, Drigas A, Skianis C, 2022 Women's Leadership via Digital Technology and Entrepreneurship in business and society , *Technium Social Sciences Journal*. 28(1), 246-252. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v28i1.5907>
- [36] Pappas M, Drigas A, Papagerasimou Y, Dimitriou H, Katsanou N, Papakonstantinou S, et al. 2018; Female Entrepreneurship and Employability in the Digital Era: The Case of Greece. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*. 4(2): 15.
- [37] M Pappas, Y Papagerasimou, A Drigas, D Raftopoulos, P Nikolaidis 2017 ICT-based Innovation and Employability for Women *International Association of Online Engineering* 7 (2), 36-47
- [38] MA Pappas, AS Drigas, Y Papagerasimou, H Dimitriou, M Giannacourou, ...2017 Online Research for the Impact of ICTs on Greek Women's Employability and Entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning* 10 (1)
- [39] Drigas A, Petrova A 2014 ICTs in speech and language therapy , *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy (ijEP)* 4 (1), 49-54 <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijep.v4i1.3280>

- [40] Alexopoulou, A., Batsou, A., & Drigas, A. S. (2019). Effectiveness of Assessment, Diagnostic and Intervention ICT Tools for Children and Adolescents with ADHD. *International Journal of Recent Contributions from Engineering, Science & IT (ijES)*, 7(3), pp. 51–63. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijes.v7i3.11178>
- [41] Bamicha V, Drigas A, 2022 The Evolutionary Course of Theory of Mind - Factors that facilitate or inhibit its operation & the role of ICTs , *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 30, 138-158, DOI:10.47577/tssj.v30i1.6220
- [42] Galitskaya, V., & Drigas, A. (2020). Special Education: Teaching Geometry with ICTs. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (ijET)*, 15(06), pp. 173–182. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i06.11242>
- [43] Lytra N, Drigas A 2021 STEAM education-metacognition-Specific Learning Disabilities , *Scientific Electronic Archives journal* 14 (10) <https://doi.org/10.36560/141020211442>
- [44] Pergantis, P., & Drigas, A. (2024). The effect of drones in the educational Process: A systematic review. *Education Sciences*, 14(6), 665. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14060665>
- [45] Chaidi, I., Pergantis, P., Drigas, A., & Karagiannidis, C. (2024). Gaming Platforms for People with ASD. *Journal of Intelligence*, 12(12), 122. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence12120122>
- [46] Demertzi E, Voukelatos N, Papagerasimou Y, Drigas A, 2018 Online learning facilities to support coding and robotics courses for youth , *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy (ijEP)* 8 (3), 69-80, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijep.v8i3.8044>
- [47] Chaidi I, Drigas A 2022 Digital games & special education, *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 34, 214-236 <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v34i1.7054>
- [48] V Galitskaya, A Drigas 2021 The importance of working memory in children with Dyscalculia and Ageometria , *Scientific Electronic Archives journal* 14 (10) <https://doi.org/10.36560/141020211449>
- [49] Drigas A, Mitsea E, Skianis C. 2022 Virtual Reality and Metacognition Training Techniques for Learning Disabilities , *SUSTAINABILITY* 14(16), 10170, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141610170>
- [50] Drigas A., Sideraki A. 2021 Emotional Intelligence in Autism , *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 26, 80, <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v26i1.5178>
- [51] Mitsea E, Drigas A., Skianis C, 2022 Breathing, Attention & Consciousness in Sync: The role of Breathing Training, Metacognition & Virtual Reality , *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 29, 79-97 <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v29i1.6145>
- [52] Kontostavrou, E. Z., & Drigas, A. (2021). How Metacognition Supports Giftedness in Leadership: A Review of Contemporary Literature. , *International Journal of Advanced Corporate Learning (ijAC)*, 14(2), pp. 4–16. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijac.v14i2.23237>
- [53] Drigas A, Mitsea E, Skianis C, 2022 Intermittent Oxygen Fasting and Digital Technologies: from Antistress and Hormones Regulation to Wellbeing, Bliss and Higher Mental States , *Technium BioChemMed journal* 3 (2), 55-73 80no107
- [54] Chaidi, I., & Drigas, A. (2022). Social and Emotional Skills of children with ASD: Assessment with Emotional Comprehension Test (TEC) in a Greek context and the role of ICTs. , *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 33(1), 146–163. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v33i1.6857>.